

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A rigidized ceramic batting board comprising:
a plurality of continuous ceramic fibers having a generally aligned fiber orientation;
a binder disposed on the fibers and fixing the fibers directly to one another,
wherein the binder exhibits reverse thermal gelation properties in aqueous solution, and is
selected from the group consisting of methylcellulose and methylcellulose derivatives, and
wherein the batting board has a uniform density of between about 5 lbs/ft³ and about 24 lbs/ft³,
and wherein the batting board is characterized by the absence of starch.

2. – 3. Cancelled

4. (Previously Presented) The ceramic batting board of Claim 1, wherein the binder
is selected from the group consisting of methylcellulose, hydroxypropyl-methylcellulose,
hydroxybutyl-methylcellulose, and combinations thereof.

5. (Original) The ceramic batting board of Claim 1, wherein the plurality of ceramic
fibers are selected from the group consisting of alumina, silica, aluminosilicate,
aluminoborosilicate, and combinations thereof.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) The ceramic batting board of Claim 5, wherein the
ceramic fibers are a combination of chopped and continuous fibers.

8. (Original) The ceramic batting board of Claim 1, wherein the batting board has a
uniform density throughout the thickness of the board.

9. (Previously Presented) The ceramic batting board of Claim 8, wherein the batting
board has a density of between about 8 lbs/ft³ and about 12 lbs/ft³.

10. (Original) The ceramic batting board of Claim 3, wherein the board is about 5
wt% to about 20 wt% binder.

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11 – 25 Cancelled

26. (Previously Presented) The ceramic batting board of Claim 1, wherein the batting board comprises two or more layers of ceramic fibers.

27. (Previously Presented) The ceramic batting board of Claim 1, wherein the batting board comprises at least one layers of continuous ceramic fibers and at least one layer of chopped ceramic fibers.